American Transcendentalism Synthesis Paper

Final Draft Due Date: Wednesday, November 8

Rough Draft Peer Edit Day: Friday, November 3

Writers and thinkers like Emerson and Thoreau tried to revolutionize our young country during the mid 1800s. As we’ve discussed in class, these men and women were known as the Transcendentalists. This group was very important in developing our nation’s identity and breaking away from the European and Puritan influences.

For this synthesis paper (a paper that includes more than one text and is thesis driven), you will be examining the characteristics of Transcendentalism as well as what made this movement so important. Through the use of outside sources, such as essays, *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*, and other short works from Transcendental writers, you will inform your reader of the impact that this group of thinkers had on our society.

This is not necessarily a research paper; you are not technically using research material to persuade your reader of a stance on a topic; you are going to use text from these thinkers/writers to support the traits of transcendentalists.

Below is a list of sources that we’ve already read in class that may help you:

“Civil Disobedience” pp. 388-389 in your textbook

“Self-Reliance” pp. 369-370 in your textbook

“Walden” pp. 379-387 in your textbook

*The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*

Other essays and stories to consider:

“Resistance to Civil Government”

“Nature” pp. 367-368

\*The following website will help you get other essays from transcendental thinkers as well.

<http://archive.vcu.edu/english/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/index.html>

Requirements:

MLA Title Page

Outline

Body (3-5 Pages)

Works Cited

Originality Report from turnitin.com

Sources:

You must have 4-6 outside sources (essays, plays, poems, film) USED in your synthesis paper. This means that if you have 6 sources listed on your Works Cited page, all 6 are used, or cited, in the text of your paper.

Remember, you will NOT be using research sites; this is simply you and the text in this paper.

This paper is our major 200-point assignment for the first semester. Grammar will consist of 100 points; content will make up of the other 100 points. You will have the option to make corrections for half credit back. In this paper, the full penalties in terms of grammar and punctuation will be assessed.

Transcendentalism –“ refers to the idea that in determining the ultimate reality of God, the universe, the self, and other important matters, one must transcend, or go beyond, everyday experiences in the physical world” (Beers and Odell).

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Transcendental Traits:

1. Everything in the world, including human beings, is a reflection of the Divine Soul.

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2. The physical facts of the natural world are a doorway to the spiritual or ideal world.

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3. People can use their intuition to behold God’s spirit revealed in nature or in their own souls.

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4. Self-reliance and individualism must outweigh external authority and blind conformity to custom and tradition.

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5. Spontaneous feelings and intuition are superior to deliberate intellectualism and rationality.

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**Everyone’s paper will be made up of seven total paragraphs; an introduction, a body discussing each of the five traits listed above, and a conclusion paragraph**.